

REMARKS

The examiner has maintained the rejections under 35 USC §103 in light of WO '638 or WO '660. The essence of the examiner's rejection appears to be that since WO '660 discloses the use of a stabilizer, the selection of a different stabilizer would simply be a matter of design choice for one skilled in the art. (As discussed in the previous response, WO '638 does not disclose the use of a stabilizer).

The applicant argued in the previous response that the inventive contribution of the current invention was the discovery that the advantages of WO -'660 could be achieved without the need to use added chemical stabilizers at all. It is believed that the basis for the examiner's continued rejection in light of this fact is due, in part, to the unfortunate use of the expression "stabilizing co-solvent" to describe the co-solvent utilized in the current invention. This unfortunate choice of expression appears to have led the examiner to equate the low boiling point organic co-solvents of the present invention with the added chemical stabilizers such as borax and salts of lignosulfonic acid from WO '660 -- which they are not.

The co-solvent of the present invention is not an added chemical agent that enhances the solubility of a substance in a solvent. It is rather the solvent itself -- and one with additional and surprising benefits. The co-solvent of the invention not only surprisingly functions as a solvent for the initiated FA, but at the same time it is organic and with low bp, ensuring that it can be pulled off by vacuum or low heat input before the curing is started. The pH is affected by the volume change, i.e. when the solvent is taken off, the volume decreases and the pH decreases. This slight down-shift in pH is then sufficient to speed up the curing (condensation polymerisation) of FA monomer initiated with maleic anhydride or one of the other imitators mentioned. The chemical stabilizer additives from WO - '660 do not in any respect cause this effect. The organic co-solvent from the present invention is also a good swelling agent for wood (see description at page 2, line 11) which is certainly not a characteristic which one would apply to the chemical stabilizer additives of WO - '660 as such.

The applicant has therefore amended the specification and claims to more clearly indicate that the current invention does not involve the addition of any added chemical stabilizer, but rather relies solely upon the solvent itself in order to achieve a single phase solution of initiated FA that may be cured by simple evaporation of the solvent volume at convenient temperatures. Support for these changes can be found, *inter alia*, at page 2 where the application describes that avoiding the use of added chemical stabilizers is one of the objects of the current invention.

In addition, the applicant has amended the language of claims 1 and 2 defining the Markush group from which the initiators can be chosen. While not directly related to the current office action, it is possible the language could be unclear, allowing an interpretation that the acids and chlorides of the group were anhydrides.